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ANOTHER SUMMIT

IT is difficult for the statesmen of the great powers to arrange a summit meeting. The agenda of such a meeting, presumably, would be about disarmament, and some of the international situations that cause tension. It must be assumed, within a reasonable degree of accuracy that these statesmen approximate to the honesty of the normally honest man. To think otherwise would be to take too pessimistic a view of human affairs. If these affairs were arranged by men, notably less honest than the men they govern, then sooner or later, it must be assumed, civilization would go up in smoke. Civilization occasionally, here and there, has gone up in smoke through the evil doings of men who govern. But on the whole it is still here, and it is here because, for instance, modern statesmen are reasonably well-intentioned. Many of them have been more than well-intentioned, they have cared more, felt more, and desired higher things than the bulk of the public.

The modern statesmen concerned with the possibility of a summit conference do not speak publicly about, say, certain high moral principles. They regard themselves no doubt as in the ordinary rut of the ordinary man. They are not concerned publicly, for instance, with religion. They believe themselves to be concerned with lay tasks.

The Heads of the Great Religions

Now it is odd that no one ever thinks it possible to call a summit meeting of the heads of all the great religions. All these heads from time to time have much to say on peace, brotherhood, and how nations should live together. They all engage in prayer. They use language that belongs to the most exalted thoughts of the human race. They are, if not saintly, then at least what is conventionally called good. It would be far too low an estimate of human nature to conclude anything other than this. They represent what is generally regarded as the best in the human race, and yet they seem paralysed to use their power collectively about questions that are agonizing a number of thoughtful men.

It is not to be supposed that any such summit meeting could consider the technical matters of what are called practical affairs. But it seems within the range of supposition that the heads of the great religions could speak in solemn meeting about some of the spiritual depths of the present crisis in the whole human race. And within the range of such a supposition their words and influence could profoundly affect affairs.

Not Even Possible

Yet such are the strange and frightening notions held about official religion that such a meeting is not even thought possible. Official religion will hold statesmen in judgment if they cannot arrange an international meeting among themselves, summit or otherwise. But no one ever dreams of questioning why the heads of the great religions do not meet. Such a meeting is not simply regarded as impracticable. It is inconceivable.

Why? The answer is demonstrably simple. It is not possible for the Pope to meet an appointed head or heads of the Mohammedan religion, or the Buddhist religion, because the official tenets of all the great religions cancel one another out. According to the unchangeable convictions of most religions each only has the capacity to look to the heart of truth, and therefore it would be treachery to truth, and a deeper treachery to religious emotion, to suggest by act or word anything else. And this situation is tacitly accepted by the members of all the great religions.

It is still regarded as odd and deeply eccentric that a Christian should become a Buddhist, and similarly odd, the other way round, from the Buddhist point of view. Even within all the great historic religions the well-known demarcations exist. That a Catholic should become a Unitarian stirs without question deep emotions in Catholic hearts, and that a Unitarian should become a Catholic stirs, one must assume, difficulties in Unitarian breasts.

Converting Others

The hidden situation behind all this is the assumption that men can only be virtuous within certain given religious beliefs. Any alteration or destruction of these religious beliefs destroys in some way the fabric of manhood, or to use more compelling language, destroys the soul. Men are passionately engaged in converting one another, when they care deeply enough to do so, because they believe they have a knowledge of their own salvation, in their different ways, and want others to share it. It is for them a gift beyond price. The question must be asked, whether such a sense of salvation, even at its highest and best (when it is very high indeed), is a sufficient response to the divine purpose.

To use the language of religion, God's will not only has to be known but interpreted. The Jew who cried some 2,400 years ago, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks so panteth my soul after thee O God", was

using the language of religion. It is a language known with gratitude and passion today. But the man who used it was thinking of a God hidden within the Temple in Jerusalem. From this God and this place he was cut off in exile. The language used in that particular context has no relevant meaning today, except in historic imagination. But interpreted, known and experienced outside that context, in all the relevant struggles of the human spirit, it is still the language of religion, and under all conditions it is likely to remain so. The permanent has to be released and understood within the fleeting.

The Abiding Position

This of course is the abiding position of religion. The history of humanity could be written around it. And religion today is not in a different position from that of the past. Do the passionately accepted demarcations interpret the full truth of the permanent in the fleeting? Are the

seemingly necessary adjurations "I am eternally right, and you are eternally wrong" the true interpretations of divine purpose? Men can crucify themselves upon a truth which is incomplete. It well may be that the temporal salvation of this world, in this immediate fleeting moment of time, may lie in the need for men to see beyond the needs of their own seeming salvation, to the needs of all men everywhere. The Buddhist may indeed need the Christian and the Christian the Buddhist but in a way hardly dreamt of in the past. It may be true that men may not be able to live without God, or without a meaning of the universe conceived within the relevance of that name, but that implies a universal task that none of the great religions is even ready to contemplate.

It seems odd that many people should deplore the failure of international statesmanship to arrange a summit meeting, and that no one should ever think of such a meeting among the great religious leaders.

REPORT FROM KHARANG RURAL CENTRE

By Margaret Barr

(Margaret Barr describes her idyllic life at Kharang? Readers will recall a very different description from a recent visitor.)

THE past year has been by far the best year I have ever had in India. I should like to tell my *Inquirer* readers about it, and try to assess both the progress and its causes.

Anyone seeing the K.R.C. today after two years' absence would hardly recognize it. Entering from the road the first thing to meet the eyes is a weaving shed with two looms and a weaving teacher in charge, and all around it a mulberry orchard: the trees are small yet, having been planted only in March, 1956, but sturdy and, we are hoping to start silkworm-rearing during this year. The next thing one sees is a garden full of vegetables. These, of course, have to be watered daily during the dry weather, but with a dozen or more able-bodied teenagers in the school, this, though a nuisance, does not raise insuperable difficulties—though it may, if we continue much longer with no rain at all. We then descend a few steps to the slightly more sheltered site of the dispensary and the nurse's quarters. Here all is activity, with villagers from miles around coming for advice and medicine at all hours of the day and often during the night, and at present it also hums by day with the planing and hammering and fetching and carrying attendant on the work of adding two new rooms to the building. In front of it is a small garden full of flowers.

A little further down the slope is the cowshed and hen-run. Here also are our straw stacks and a field of sweet potatoes. Then come the school buildings. First the old kitchen-cum-schoolroom, built in 1954, to which we added an extension last winter to be a girls' dormitory and guest flat: and a little lower still is the building containing my flat, a tiny guest-room and the boys' dormitory which we also use as a schoolroom by day. My garden, like the one higher up, is also full of flowers and vegetables, and in several other places further away from the buildings are fields of potatoes and sweet potatoes.

We get rather more than half a gallon of milk a day from our cows, and the older girls know how to make cheese, and butter, and milk puddings. All of the children, boys and girls, knitted themselves warm pullovers for the winter, and during the year we have sold about 50 woollen garments to the local villagers, while the boys keep us supplied with cane stools and baskets.

Does this sound as if all our time goes in practical work? Nothing could be further from the truth. We rarely have less

than five hours' classwork a day, and another hour or more of homework in the evening; and the progress made in all school subjects is far in excess of anything I expected to achieve at the beginning of the year.

We have prayers morning and evening, and a Sunday evening service taken in turn by the different religious groups. These are all times of worship and devotion, and though we represent no less than five different types of religious faith and practice, the note of controversy is rarely heard. We are building up a splendid repertoire of English hymns and songs, which the children seem to be beginning to like better than the Khasi ones; and as they go singing about their work in kitchen and field, it is "Father, lead me day by day"; "Glad that I live am I"; "Who killed cock robin?" and such, that one hears now in place of the Moody and Sankey with which the year started.

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Now to try to assess the causes of this great and encouraging change of scene. The first and by far the most important of these is that I now have two helpers immeasurably better than anyone I have ever had before. These are the wife, Maida Walling, who took over at a moment's notice only two days before I left for England in 1956, and her brother, Dran, who gave up a lucrative post in the local government office in Shillong to come and help her in October, 1956. The midwife runs the ante-natal and post-natal clinic, and conducts confinements whenever sent for in the villages for miles around. She also acts as school nurse, teaching hygiene and looking after the children's health. The brother runs the dispensary, plays the part of amateur doctor, supervises all the outdoor work of the school, teaches the boys carpentry, and all the children Khasi, and is my handyman on all occasions—in short an ideal and absolutely invaluable person for rural work. They are both tireless workers (an almost unique phenomenon among Khasis), and, even more surprising, they are both heart and soul in the work of the Centre, its purposes and ideals. In addition they are both grand companions, full of fun and zest for life, honest to the last farthing, and almost embarrassingly free from any sort of greed or self-seeking. It is the combined contribution of these two that has done more than anything else to make possible the progress of 1957.

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The next major cause of the progress is a financial one, and especially the contribution of the Canadian Unitarian Service Committee. This is the third year in which we have received from that generous organization a grant adequate to cover all the expenses of the health and maternity activities of the Centre. But in addition, during this last year, eight of my schoolchildren have been "adopted" by Canadian foster-parents, a process which has resulted in a most acceptable

maintenance grant for the children. Also I have received grants from two departments of the Government of Assam, enough to relieve us of any financial anxiety for the current year, though not yet enough to enable us to embark upon all the extensions we should like to make.

Last, and from the point of view of the churches by far the most important thing that has happened during the last twelve months, is that I have at last made a start in the matter of youth leadership courses. For some years now the conviction has been steadily growing upon me that by far the most valuable contribution I can make to the life of the churches is by training some of the better-educated young people as leaders. In 1951 I made an effort in this direction, but it proved abortive; and though I have explained my plan several times to the officers of the Union, it seems to have fallen upon deaf ears. So this year I decided to make a direct approach to the young people themselves, and wrote to the secretary of the Seng Samla (which is Khasi for Young People's League). The outcome of this was that two small groups have been over during the Christmas holidays—first, three college students from Shillong, two of whom could, unfortunately, only have one night here as they are working in offices by day and attending night school to study for their degrees, thus earning their way through college. The time with them was too short to do much, but enough to generate enthusiasm and a desire for more. Then in January a group of four came from Jowai and stayed for three nights, and with them the remaining one of the Shillong group. This gave us two full days in which to read and sing and study and worship together.

It was particularly fortunate that for this new venture I should have the help and co-operation of my latest long-term guest, the Rev. Mabel Beames, who has been with me since the end of October. She taught us new hymns, gave an inspiring address at the closing session, and by her general friendliness and cheerfulness made a notable contribution to the event. As, indeed, she is doing daily to the life of the Centre as a whole.

It is too early yet to assess the value of this experiment, but I am inclined to think that it may be the beginning of a new chapter in my work for the Khasi churches.

ZETA — A NEW VIEW

By John Rowland

THE release of the news that the British Atomic Energy Authority has succeeded, in an experimental way, in taming the hydrogen bomb, and in controlling the conversion of heavy hydrogen into helium, is something which has caused delight in some quarters and despondency in others. At first sight, this does not seem to have much to do with our religion; but it would seem necessary, at any rate, for all religious people to have some idea of what it implies, if only in that this may, before many years are past, produce sudden and surprising changes in our way of life.

It has, too, implications in the international field, which the Press has not mentioned, possibly because they suggest certain moral and ethical faults in the outlook of the British Government (and, indeed, all governments) in the past.

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The atomic power stations of the Calder Hall type, which have been greeted as great advances in engineering technology (as indeed they are), are dependent, it seems, on one important factor, as regards their financial management; they produce, as a by-product, the new element, plutonium. This plutonium is used partly in the running of a different type of power station, such as that under construction at Dounreay in Scotland, and partly in atomic weapons; it is bought by the government at an agreed price; and the economic running of Calder Hall is dependent on the sale of the plutonium. Dounreay, when once it is running on a satisfactory basis, will be self-supporting as regards plutonium; in other words, it will need a considerable amount of this radioactive metal to start with, but when it has been started, it will produce

more plutonium than it uses up. This seems fantastic; but the non-scientific can be assured that it is true. It therefore appears that, when there are a number of stations of the Dounreay type, there will be a surplus of plutonium, for which there will be only one use—in atomic weapons. And it may be that those of us who are campaigning for the outlawing of atomic weapons may, unwittingly, be throwing out of economic balance the working of the atomic power stations of Great Britain. It is only necessary, too, to mention the fact that other countries, including Italy and Japan, are purchasing stations of the Calder Hall type, to make it clear that this will, before long, become an international problem.

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This is where the new type of reactor, which has been called Zeta, comes into the picture. This uses heavy hydrogen, a substance that can be extracted from sea-water, which contains a very small proportion; the reaction which will, in a few years, be producing power, is the change of two atoms of heavy hydrogen into one atom of helium. Helium is not dangerous and is not something that can be used in weapons. The building of Zeta-type reactors, therefore, is an example of something which we very rarely see in the modern world—it is an example of a warlike discovery being applied to peaceful ends, which is the reverse of what so often happens in our society today.

So often religious people accuse the scientists of deliberately planning more and more horrible weapons of destruction: there is some truth in this, as regards those scientists who work for some government departments; but, generally speaking, science is neutral on these affairs. If some great discovery in pure science is made, the way in which it is to be applied is not a matter which the scientists decide—it is a matter which is settled largely by governments and political leaders. Science merely gives man the "know-how" (to use the modern phrase); the application of these things is not primarily a matter for the scientists.

So Zeta, in which the warlike principle of the hydrogen bomb is applied to the peaceful end of giving man more and cheaper electric power, is something to be warmly welcomed; it may also, as has been suggested above, help to release the atomic scientists from the economic grip of the War Office; all religious people of all views should be thankful for this, since it may well prove to be the first step towards a release from the ring of fear that has encircled mankind ever since the days of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

COMMENT

Oriental Poverty

ONE hears often of the crushing poverty of Asiatic countries, but I doubt if anywhere the condition of the masses is so appalling as it is in Afghanistan. I have just been reading an article in which it is said that the average yearly income of the people is only 20 dollars, not sufficient to buy the turban, sleeveless coat, and baggy breeches that constitute the traditional Afghan's costume. In Kabul itself the sewers are open, and are used indiscriminately for washing and for reviving fruit and vegetables withered in the summer sun. Only about 200 doctors, mainly living in Kabul, minister to the needs of 12 million people; it is little wonder that one child in seven dies before it reaches the age of one year. The government tries to get help by setting Russia and the United States in opposition. They realize, however, the danger in friendship with Russia, and they are anxious to get more help from the West. Their case, indeed, is a typical one which shows the advisability of giving assistance, not through any national agency, but through the social, economic and financial organs of the United Nations.

The Artist's Isolation

Mr. Archibald MacLeish, one of the most considerable poets in the United States, has been complaining of the isolation of the American artist, using that word to designate not

merely painters and musicians, but, more particularly, writers. Part of the fault, he says, lies in the materialism of American life. "When they (Americans) talk, as they tend to do, about 'the American Way of Life', they give the impression that they are thinking not of the freedom they have won for their minds, but of the gadgets they have collected for their houses and automobiles". The Republic once expressed itself through Whitman and Emerson, but now it is the banker, the oilman and the general who are heard abroad, whilst at home the artist has all those indignities inflicted on him that McCarthyism can invent.

Part of the blame, however, attaches to the artist himself, for many artists seem to declare that the effort to act upon the external world in the making of a work of art is a betrayal and misconception of the nature of art itself. On the contrary, says Mr. MacLeish, "the nature of art is action, and there is no part of human experience, public or private, on which it cannot act or should not". America may be magnificently industrialized, "but she desperately needs defenders who can use the weapons of the Spirit, for it is there that she is vulnerable".

"Cinderellas" of the Welfare State

The Private Members' Bill to provide minimum standards of conditions for people working in offices was "talked out" in the House of Commons, but not before the government spokesman had admitted the need for remedying the evils complained of, although they were not, it was said, satisfactorily dealt with in that Bill. The sponsor of the Bill remarked that if conditions such as were common in London offices were found in factories, the employer would be prosecuted under the Factories Act.

To my mind, this state of affairs has arisen because the same attention has not been given to the nationalization of office work as has been applied to actual production. Speaking in Manchester a few days ago, the president of the Work Study Society told her audience, however, that there were signs now that industry appreciated the need for time and motion study in offices as much as on the factory floor. The growing use of electronic computers must lead, too, to a greater efficiency in office work, for it is only so that such expensive machines can be economically used. Whilst such changes will in the first place affect the larger offices, the necessity for greater efficiency and the necessary improvement in office conditions will soon be felt and acted upon in office work everywhere.

A New Definition

A small boy spoke at the breakfast table of a dream he had had. "Peter", said his mother, "do you know what a dream is?" "Of course I do", was the answer, "a cinema in your sleep".

Commentator.

FROM MY JOURNAL

By "Simplicius"

OUR good secretary Y. promised to drop a form into my door on his way to work this morning. I was at my desk when I saw him unlatch the gate and consequently was at the open door to greet him. "Good gracious, Mr. S.", he said. "You're up already and you've got your boots on?" "Yes", I replied. "A dear old tutor of mine once said, 'Gentlemen, never be found in the morning writing the word of the Lord in carpet slippers'." Words failed him for a minute until he handed over the form for my signature. "Well, I must be off and get started myself", he said, his amazement still patent. But I wonder how long he will remember his early morning call. I guarantee that next time he wants to pull my leg he will still infer I breakfast at ten, read through the papers and eventually get out my sermon pad just as he is off to the canteen for his lunch. He'll go on believing in my tardy timetable because he wants to do so.

Changing trains at Lowtown today I had a few words with its station master, the secretary of our Lowtown chapel. I was able to inquire how they were getting on with their new settlement. "We've had X down", he said, "and we all like him very much, but I'm all for having him down again with his wife before we finally decide". I took his remark home where I knew it would set off an explosion. "You can ask him from me", said my wife, "whether British Railways gave him his job because his wife was able to give talks on travelling hopefully. And does she run parties for the passengers' children and put on a supper if they are round at his house at nine o'clock?" Ruth is always forthright in this matter because she is concerned for the minister's wife with her own career of service, and above all, sympathetic for the many wives who are too shy for public work. She insists that what she does in Redville she is glad to do as a member of the congregation. I see her point.

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What we poor speakers have to contend with! I was asked to address our Greytown Unitarian Literary Club to-night at 7.30 p.m. I arrived ten minutes before the secretary who at five and twenty to eight hurried up to unlock the door. From 7.45 until 8.15 I sat through a long agenda of who should do what at the forthcoming Brins and Buy Sale. When I finally got on my feet the secretary commenced an intricate game of snap with his papers. Just as he had secured them with brown paper and was hunting through his pockets for the necessary string, the rattle of tea cups came through the door that opened on to the kitchen. The mounting crescendo finally made me bring my talk on "Poets of Quiet Places" to a hasty conclusion. Words failed me then as they do so now! But over the tea cups they all said they enjoyed it. One forgets how accustomed they all are to listening to a programme at home against the arguments of children and the whine of a sewing machine.

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How difficult it is nowadays to give anything away! I set off last week with the surplus of our apple crop, leaving a few pounds here and there where I thought they would be acceptable. But I suppose people these days are afraid of being thought cases for the parson's charity, so to prove the contrary, back during the week have come a variety of gifts for us, including a potatoe pie and a pair of socks. I had thought of similarly disposing of the rest of our runner beans, but now I shall have to think again! Yet how kind it is of everyone and how I rejoice they are well enough off to make the gifts.

THE RAISED HAND

By E. Shirvell Price

RECENTLY, a younger brother minister asked me what was the significance of a minister raising his right hand in blessing when pronouncing the Benediction; was it proper to do so?; and, if so, why did some of our ministers make this gesture and others not?

My own reaction to the raised hand of blessing, when performed by a Unitarian, has always been one of mild discomfort, though, until the question was put squarely to me, it was an undefined dislike. Only once, I believe, did I ever raise my hand in blessing a Unitarian congregation, and it seemed so unnatural to me that, without further self-questioning, I never repeated it.

It may seem a trivial matter, or one better left to the personal tastes of the minister, but thinking around the question I quickly came to the conclusion that a raised hand in blessing meant a difference in the relationship in which the minister felt himself to be with his congregation. Does not a raised hand suggest that he is, himself, blessing the congregation, presumably on behalf of Almighty God? The form of Benediction which properly belongs to such a gesture is: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee . . .", which is proper

to the orthodox priesthood; whereas, every one of the Benedictions suggested at the end of "Orders of Worship" is couched in the form: "The Lord bless us and keep us . . ." By this token the minister identifies himself with the congregation and invokes the blessing of God on all, himself included.

Do ministers who bless their congregations change the words of those Benedictions, back into their orthodox form, which is proper to the raised hand of a priest who faces the congregation but with his back to the altar?

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Surely it is not of the genius of Unitarianism that its ministers should assume the priestly office to the extent of putting themselves between God and the worshipper? If, on occasion, a minister has spoken words of truth so that he seemed, to the worshipper, to have been the veritable mouth-piece of God, it is sufficient with us that the minister be deemed a man of God, not that he himself assume a priestly role. Yet this hand raised in blessing seems to indicate such an assumption. Or, is there some other good reason for this practice which I have failed to discern?

I have seen almost the same gesture used, with different significance, with the words: "Let us bow our heads in worship" without misgiving. It is also quite another matter on a pastoral visit, when parting from a sick bed or an anxious home, to say a heartfelt "God bless you", or even on parting from a congregation amongst whom a minister has laboured with devotion and mutual affection. Special occasions may make the gesture a natural and proper one, but the normal close of public worship seems quite another matter.

Are our congregations coming to require this gesture of their ministers, or is it introduced solely at their volition? Does the laity feel that it is right and proper? I wonder whether the implications have been clearly thought out even by such of our ministers who make the gesture habitual. I do not know who they are, so I am speaking in personal criticism.

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Even if a representative number of my congregation asked me to bless them by the raising of the hand, I think I should reply: "I too need the blessing of God for the week's work, and I need the blessing of God in your active response to my ministrations quite as much as you need mine; that is part of our membership together of the Beloved Community."

Finally, we might ask ourselves whether the Benediction is, for us, a formality to which we pay much attention? I am sure it is not so for any minister who has been heart and soul in the service. We have whittled away the force of the Benediction, as practised by our forebears, wherever we habitually sing a choral verse, especially after a morning service. Is this the demand of the congregation that they, and not the minister shall have the last word?; or is it the choir's last word?

But perhaps this is quite a different matter from that with which I began. It shows, however, that both ministers and congregations should be aware of the dangers of monkeying about with our traditional form and rubric of service. I am not for "no change", but only against thoughtless innovations which obscure the true spirit and high purpose of our worship.

It has been increasingly a matter of concern to me, during these post-war years, that the meaning and value of every part of our services should be examined, understood and re-evaluated. "Orders of Worship" has been of inestimable value, both in raising the liturgical standard of our public worship, and in bringing greater unity of observance amongst us. But strict adherence to its eight services is likely to harden down into a 20th century Unitarian orthodoxy, unless we soon become alive to what is happening, and proceed to do something about it. This is a major concern of the whole denomination, laity as well as ministers.

VIEWS, NEWS AND NOTES

By A. B. Downing

I WAS delighted recently to receive a letter from 32 Pioneer Avenue, Discovery, Transvaal. A more fitting address for a Unitarian I have yet to come across! It was from an old friend of mine, Donald Livingstone, erstwhile minister at Cape Town and now a university lecturer in philosophy. Years ago I was his Best Man and I have ever since admiringly remembered with what nice shafts of wit he adorned his own wedding. As far as wit is concerned he does not seem to have changed with the passing of the years. In his student days he wore plus-fours, a shock of unruly hair at all times, and on Mondays the white shirt in which he had preached the day before. I particularly remember the white shirt. He was our Senior Student and his white shirt on Mondays always seemed to make him just that bit different from the rest of us!

From his Pioneer address at this place called Discovery, he tells me that once more in Johannesburg they have a Unitarian Fellowship, which meets once a month. It began in December, 1956, with a dozen people, jumped to 20 the following April and has never been less than 20 since. A pretty typical group, he tells me, with no lunatic fringe, and ranging from a Belfast Unitarian on the right to a Texan Humanist on the left. What theologians call exegesis is always required to interpret Donald's communications, so whether he actually means someone from Belfast and another, at the opposite religious pole, from Texas, I hesitate to say. The main point is the Fellowship's variety and knowing Donald's talents I can well imagine his ability to cope with it. There is so far no ambition to become a church in the traditional sense and in these changing days that may very well be wise indeed. I hope that at our next General Assembly we shall send them a friendly message of greeting and encouragement. My old friend at Pioneer Avenue, Discovery, deserves at least that, and so do the fine folk around him.

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Another honour has come to Dr. E. A. (Tony) Wrigley, of Peterhouse, Cambridge. He has just been awarded an Ellen McArthur Prize for his work in economic history and one gathers that the award of this prize often heralds the future publication of some original work. He is the elder son of a very much loved minister, the Rev. E. E. Wrigley, whose rich personal influence is still being felt by all who came into contact with him during his life-time.

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I am glad to report that the Secretary of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in London is now a Unitarian, who is well known to my Dean Row congregation. Mr. F. A. Smits has just been appointed to that post and what is a loss to us in Wilmslow will surely be a gain to our Unitarian friends in London. He worked for many years in Java and Indonesia and latterly regularly commuted, in the way Dutch business men have, between Amsterdam, Wilmslow, Brussels and the Gold Coast! He and his wife are a grand couple, who have a wonderfully human enthusiasm for everything from curry to culture, with a solid centre of interest in our liberal religious witness. May they make happy contacts with Unitarians in London.

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The things we Unitarians are asked to do? I have just carefully translated into pious French a fervently evangelical letter from someone who is an ardent enemy of most of what we stand for and who wanted to send a French Bible to an agnostic in Switzerland. I confess I got quite a kick out of it and was amused to receive, as a reward for my labours, a missionary novel about a young lady who, according to the blurb, is disarmingly frank about her love affairs, her financial problems and her weaknesses, but through them all came to find her Saviour. The book is priced at 4s. 6d. and is said to be "of real value, especially for young people". I have a strong suspicion that if the situation had been reversed, and it had been I who had asked for such a favour, it would

have been refused. But I suppose I was right in giving my help, or wasn't I? Talk it over at dinner-time on Sunday!

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Unitarians in Manchester who pass the site of the old Cross Street Chapel all know that re-building is in progress. It is scarcely possible to conceal the fact. We are all naturally anxious to know what the new building will look like and when it will be finished. The chairman of the Chapel Trustees is Mr. S. B. L. Jacks and I know that he and his colleagues have been grappling with some tricky legal and architectural problems, not to mention financial ones. But the re-building work has at last been started. Mr. Jacks tells me that the Trustees are hoping to release, as soon as possible, official information about the project and the help they will certainly require, for its completion, from the widest circles of those who are interested and, indeed, concerned. I am assured that this information will be released before long, in fact, as soon as the necessary work of co-ordination has been completed. Cross St. Chapel has played such an historic role in the life of Manchester that a good many different interests—religious, civic and cultural—are involved. To these interests the Trustees are anxious to pay the most scrupulous attention. So we shall all know more in due course.

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One piece of denominational news surely deserves comment. With the appointment of Basil Short to the pulpit at Ullet Road Church, Liverpool, we now have two of our senior church appointments occupied by members of the Short family, since his brother (Graham Short) is minister of Essex Church, London. We also, of course, have Lismer Short who is the scholarly Librarian and Warden of Manchester College, Oxford. He is brother to the other two. They are a wonderful family, each generation seeming to have its own versatile strength undiminished in transmission.

★

Theological colleges are not normally places which one associates with tragedy. But they are not exempt from it, as is obvious from the latest report of the Dean of the Free Protestant Theological Faculty of Paris, which trains ministers (including those of liberal tendency) for the various branches of the French Reformed Church. The dreadful French war in Algeria has brought personal grief to our respected brethren in the Faculty, for one of their students was killed in a "rebel" ambush some time ago, together with some 25 of his military comrades. Such tragedies are frequently happening in France, but the grief they always cause comes home to us with special force when they touch our own religious fraternity. The student they have lost seems to have been a very promising one. As if his tragic death is not enough, the Faculty has lost another student in a bathing accident in Italy, and he has left behind a mother who has only recently been widowed. Such news formed a very gloomy prelude to what is a most interesting report of the Faculty's work. The Paris Free Faculty has a very distinguished reputation, which it seems to have no difficulty in maintaining.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer", 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

What Shall We Do?

Sir,—What is convincing, though impossible, should always be preferred to what is possible and unconvincing. So says Aristotle, discussing the dramatist's problem in "Poetics". Dare I suggest that Mrs. Abel, in her letter this week, adopts Aristotle's advice for the play and transfers it, mutatis mutandis, to real life? Evidently she is certain that Russia is determined to subdue by force the whole world, and there is no doubt that this idea is superficially convincing and gains all the applause. But because of the power of the spirit (human and divine), we must believe that such an idea does in the end hide an impossibility.

Unlike Mrs. Abel, I am therefore left facing not an insoluble dilemma, but a problem which can be solved, however difficult, and the way to a solution begins at the point pleasantly indicated by your contributor "Commentator" in this week's article. How easy is a Russian supposed to be a bear!—Yours,
Newcastle, Staffs.
D. S. Malbon.

Ought We To Pray?

Sir,—Whilst agreeing with the main purport of Mr. Hartkop's letter (*The Inquirer*, February 1, 1958), I would like to enlarge on his reference to prayer, in which some people believe, but which seems to others silly and dishonest, he says.

James Montgomery writes: "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire uttered or unexpressed", which means that everybody is always praying, consciously or subconsciously, for the things they greatly desire. Therefore, it is most necessary to train our subconscious thoughts, via some conscious medium such as meditation or contemplation and by the higher levels of petitionary prayer. We do this also through literature and the arts. Even a gangster's mind is not entirely vacuous. The only technique for changing one's character is conscious and persistent prayer.

The Rev. Philip Hewitt writes that in the Unitarian Church services in Canada, the traditional forms of language are cut to a minimum, and some, like the Lord's Prayer, have completely disappeared. This deserves our consideration. I suspect that very few people really understand the Lord's Prayer or can repeat it with sincere desire. Is there not a danger that it has become what Jesus called "a vain repetition"? He was a believer in prayer and seems to have understood its psychological method and effect, and said that men were always to pray and not to faint. By what other means can we grow morally better? I pray someone to tell me.—Yours,
10 Bramley Hill, Croydon.
Evelyn Savage.

Richard Holt Hutton — A Request

Sir,—I am engaged on a doctoral dissertation for the University of London on Richard Holt Hutton, editor of *The Inquirer* from 1851 to 1853, of the *National Review* from 1855 to 1862, and of *The Spectator* from 1861 to 1897.

I would, therefore, deeply appreciate hearing from any readers of *The Inquirer* who know the location of manuscripts relating to my research. Although I am especially anxious to examine letters by or about R. H. Hutton, I shall be grateful for any information at all that your readers may care to send me.—Yours,
Robert H. Tener.

15 Josephine Avenue, Brixton, London, S.W.2.

THE INQUIRER

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Deaths

Hampson—On January 23 at Rochford Hospital, Ellen Hampson, aged 87; for 35 years a beloved member of Southend Church, and formerly of Cairo Street, Warrington. Sister of Catherine Adlard, 178 Shaftesbury Avenue, Thorpe Bay, Essex.

Magnire—At 54 Brackendale Gardens, Upminster, on January 11, Percy, the beloved husband of Charlotte.

Rowe—On Sunday, February 2, Beatrice, beloved wife of Rev. Mortimer Rowe, aged 79 years.

Holiday Accommodation

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Miscellaneous

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The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches ANNUAL MEETINGS

LONDON: Tuesday, April 15, to Friday, April 18

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

THE ANNUAL MEETINGS of the General Assembly will be held as above. The formal notice has been sent to all Ministers, Church and District Association Secretaries, etc. The Annual Business Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 16, at 10 a.m., in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1. Resolutions intended for the Agenda must be sent in writing by March 1 accompanied or quickly followed by the names of the mover and seconder.

This is the year of the Triennial Election and nomination forms have been sent to the above-mentioned persons. They must be returned not later than March 1.

15 Gordon Square,
London, W.C.1.

John Kieley (Secretary).

Ashton-under-Lyne: A novel form of worship was introduced at Richmond Hill Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, last Sunday, when the whole congregation participated in an act of dedication of their everyday work. The service, linked by a commentary given by Mr. Philip M. Brown, had as its theme, "Work in the service of God", and in place of the normal address, members brought forward symbols of their trade or profession, placing them on the communion table in the spirit that the knights of old laid their spurs on the altar. "The man who makes his work an act of service to his fellow men, worships God in the best sense of all", claimed Mr. Brown, introducing the service. Symbols brought to the table represented occupations as diverse as accountants and railway shunters.

At the conclusion of the service, members expressed appreciation at a stimulating new approach to worship, and several members hoped it would prove possible to present a similar service again.

Doncaster: On January 26 the Minister (Rev. G. W. Parkinson) conducted a service "In Memory of Robert Burns" at which members of the Doncaster Caledonian Society were present. Burns' songs were sung and, at the subsequent Social Hour, three films of Scottish life and scenery were shown. Under the auspices of the Men's Fellowship, a talk on the 1957 U.Y.P.L. expedition to the Arctic Circle, illustrated by coloured slides, was given on January 28 by the leader of the party, the Rev. K. Treacher, of Golders Green, assisted by Mr. N. Williams, of Doncaster, who was a member of the party.

James Mather

With the death of Mr. James Mather on January 19 at the age of 85, Stand Unitarian Chapel and School has lost a stalwart of a past generation. His active interest ranged from the Cricket Club, both as player and supporter, to the old Sick and Burial Club, from Sunday School teaching for over 20 years to the Annual Exhibition. But perhaps the best indication of Mr. Mather's devotion and service is to be found in the fact that he held office almost continually for half a century. He was Sunday School Secretary from 1895-98 and Sunday School Treasurer from 1900 until 1927, a period covering financial difficulties as well as raising funds for the extension which was built in 1908 to celebrate the Centenary of the School. He was a Trustee of the Chapel and School from 1925 until his death, and Secretary to the Trustees from 1926-45.

He moved to Garstang, near Preston, just before the last war, but regularly returned to all major events until prevented by poor health during the last two years. His loyalty and conscientious attention to practical details will always be remembered by those who knew him.

He was buried at Stand on January 22, the Rev. Sydney H. Knight officiating.

S.H.K.

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